

Message Text

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56-S

ACTION SS-25

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O R 261455Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5347

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 1262

E X D I S

3.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJ: CONTINUING PRESS ALLEGATIONS RE CIA ACTIVITIES IN ITALY

1. STAMPA SERA MONDAY CARRIES ARTICLE BY CARLO SARTORI ALLEGING THAT CHURCH AND PIKE COMMITTEES HAVE INFORMATION INDICATING THAT CIA PAYMENTS DURING THE PAST TWO MONTHS WERE MADE TO ANDREOTTI AND DONAT FACTIONS IN DC, TO SARAGAT GROUP IN PSDI, AND TO CISL UNION LEADER SCALIA. STORY ADDS THAT ADDITIONAL POLITICIANS ALSO WERE BELIEVED TO HAVE RECEIVED PAYMENTS, ESPECIALLY THOSE EXPECTED TO BE CANDIDATES IN ROME ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS THIS SPRING.

2. SARTORI SAYS THIS INFORMATION RECEIVED SATURDAY EVENING DIRECTLY FROM WASHINGTON THROUGH "PERSONS CLOSE TO MEMBERS TO THE COMMISSION."

3. STAMPA SERA CHIEF EDITOR ENNIO CARETTO, FORMER US CORRESPONDENT FOR LA STAMPA AND A RESPONSIBLE JOURNALIST ASSERTED IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS LAST WEEK THAT HIS PAPER WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN GAME OF NAMING INDIVIDUALS ALLEGED TO BE CIA, KBG OR OTHER INTELLIGENCE AGENTS, BUT THAT "RELIABLE" INFORMATION HE HAD FROM AMERICAN SOURCES MADE IT NECESSARY FOR HIM TO PUBLISH CERTAIN ALLEGATIONS. EMBOFFS STRESSED REPEATEDLY THAT ALLEGATIONS ON DECEMBER PAYMENTS WERE FALSE AND ERRONEOUS AND THAT NO PAYMENTS HAD BEEN MADE. CARETTO REPLIED THAT, REGARDLESS OF TRUTH OF MATTER, "NO ONE IN ITALY BELIEVES THIS- AND THAT CIA DIRECTOR COLBY'S
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DENIAL CARRIED NO CREDIBILITY. HE URGED THAT EMBASSY

AND WASHINGTON ISSURE FURTHER CLARIFICATIONS IF
FACTS AND POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES PERMITTED. HE STRESSED
THAT US INTERESTS WERE BEING GRAVELY AFFECTED HERE AND
THAT STORY WOULD NOT DIE DOWN. FAILURE TO MAKE FURTHER
CLARIFICATIONS, ACCORDING TO CARETTO, MEANT THAT EVERY
ALLEGATION, NO MATTER, HOW ABSURD, IS NOW ACCEPTED
WITHOUT SERIOUS QUESTION.

4. EMBASSY REQUESTS DEPARTMENT TO RE-EXAMINE FEASIBILITY
OF ISSUING DENIAL OR AUTHORIZE EMBASSY TO DO SO) IN VIEW OF
ERRONEOUS INFORMATION WHICH IS BEING CIRCULATED EVERY DAY AND
WHICH WE BELIVE IS AFFECTING POLITICAL CLIMATE IN WAYS HARM-
FUL TO OUR INTERESTS AND POSING INCREASING THREAT TO IN-
DIVIDUALS.VOLPE

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS ADDED PER S/SO, MR. MACFARLANE.

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